DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 481 059 TM 035 310

AUTHOR	Shlechter, Theodore M.
TITLE	An Examination of Current and Future Directions in the U.S. Army's Mentoring Process.
PUB DATE	2003-04-00
NOTE	24p.; This paper was presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL, April 21-25, 2003).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Mentors; *Military Personnel; Military Service; Military Training
IDENTIFIERS	*Army

ABSTRACT

This study included a literature review of mentoring practices in Army and civilian organizations and an exploratory research effort concerning mentoring practices in the U.S. Army. The research effort consisted of 11 people (9 Army personnel and 2 civilians) were associated with training programs at an Army post. Participants completed a mentoring questionnaire that contained items about their mentoring experience and the impact of mentoring on their career and personal development. They also responded to structured interview items, which proved their notions about current and possible future mentoring practices. This investigation's findings have led to a potentially viable and much needed definition of mentoring, with a key element of the process involving a strong personal bond between protégé and mentor. Mentoring also seems to be pervasive in the U.S. Army; however, the Army's mentoring processes, while effective, may not be optimal. This investigation's data also suggest the need for a telementoring system, which could be a harbinger of 21st century mentoring practices. (Contains 14 references.) (Author/SLD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

TM TMTR 0214

ED 481 059

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
T. Shlechter
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
1

An Examination of Current And Future Directions in the U.S. Army's Mentoring Process

Theodore M. Shlechter[1]

Louisville, KY

Running head: Directions in Mentoring

[1] Dr. Theodore Shlechter is affiliated with the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences; however, Dr. Shlechter has completed this paper on his own time. The opinions expressed in this paper are solely those of this author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Army nor the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences. This paper was presented in April, 2003 at the American Educational Research Association's Annual Meeting in Chicago.

TM035310

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ABSTRACT

The present investigation included a literature review of mentoring practices in Army and civilian organizations and an exploratory research effort concerning mentoring practices in the U.S. Army. The research effort consisted of eleven people (9 Army personnel and 2 civilians) who were associated with the training programs at an Army post. Participants completed a mentoring questionnaire that contained items about their mentoring experience and the impact of mentoring upon their career and personal development. They also responded to structured interview items, which probed their notions about current and possible future mentoring practices. This investigation's findings have led to a potentially viable and much needed definition of mentoring, with a key element of this process involving a strong personal bond between protégé and mentor. Mentoring also seems to be pervasive in the U.S. Army; however, the Army's mentoring process while effective might not be optimal. This investigation's data also suggest the need for a telementoring system, which could be the harbinger of 21st century mentoring practices.

AN EXAMINATION OF CURRENT AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS IN THE U.S. ARMY'S MENTORING PROCESS

Introduction

Mentoring is quite prevalent in today's corporate and training worlds. This popularity is manifested by the 1,524 hits found for the term, "mentoring," in a search of the EBSCO business, psychology and educational databases for 1999-2001. Mentoring is also a common "catch phrase" in the U.S. Army (Steinberg & Foley, 1999).

This paper examines current practices and future directions in the U.S. Army's mentoring process. One possible future direction may involve emerging computer technologies as mentoring tools. Insights into the Army's current and future mentoring practices should have relevance for professionals in the non-military training communities.

Overview of Mentoring in the Army

Steinberg and Foley (1999) have found mentoring to be widespread in the U.S. Army, with 84% of the U.S. Army's NCOs and officers having had, at least, one mentor. This finding is based upon the self-report data of 3,715 active Army senior non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and 4,876 active Army commissioned officers. (Other aspects of Steinberg and Foley's research are discussed later.) This popularity for mentoring is based upon the widely held belief of its training value. As noted in the U.S. Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP) Officer Study Report to the U.S. Army: "Officers believe mentoring is important for both personal and professional development" (Department of the U.S. Army [DA]).

The U.S. Army's non-commissioned officers (NCOs) also believe that mentoring

is important for their career development. Over 61% of the nearly 80,000 Army enlisted personnel and NCOs respondents to the 1995 *Sample Survey Military Personnel* believed that mentoring could help advance their careers (DA, 1995). The experienced U.S. Army soldiers (e.g., senior NCOs) were much more likely to hold this belief than were the more inexperienced soldiers (e.g., the enlisted personnel). Mentoring may also have organizational benefits for the US Army. Most notably, mentoring reduces turnover within an organization (Viator & Scandura, 1991; as cited by Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Johnson, Huwe, Fallow, Lall, Holmes, Hall, Captain W. (1999), for example, found that officers in the U.S. Navy's Medical Services who have been mentored tend to report higher job satisfaction ratings and an intent to remain on active duty than those officers who have not received any mentoring.

Current Practices

Definition of mentoring. Perhaps the biggest issue in the field of mentoring involves defining this term? Mertz (2001) notes that definitions of mentoring "come in all sizes, shapes and levels of inclusiveness." She also observes that not even researchers can agree on the definition and functions of mentoring. Mentoring, according to Mertz, seems to be a catchall term that involves an undetermined amount of job coaching and personal counseling

The U.S. Army has several definitions of mentoring. Its field manual (FM) on leadership (FM 22-100[Department of the Army, 1999]) describes mentoring as the development of (a leader's) subordinates through observing, assessing, coaching, teaching, developmental counseling, and evaluating them. The U.S. Army pamphlet on leadership (DAP 350-58 [DA, 1994])] defines mentoring as "an optional, subjective

process -- between a concerned senior and a very few of his juniors -- involving open/candid dialogue, career advice, support, professional commitment, assistance with assignment patterns, and caring." These two definitions provide a slightly different picture concerning the dimensions of the Army's mentoring process.

Dimensions of the Army's mentoring process. Career advancement and psychosocial functions are the most frequently discussed dimensions of mentoring for civilian organizations (Kram, 1985; 1988 as cited by Steinberg & Foley). Both functions serve to enhance a protégé's sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness in a professional role. The career achievement dimension includes providing the protégé with job coaching and challenging assignments. Job coaching would, for example, involve an experienced baseball player in giving a rookie tips on hitting different pitches.

Based on the cited dimensions of mentoring for civilian organizations, Steinberg and Foley (2000) developed a survey on mentoring practices in the U.S. Army. This survey contains 16 items concerning the behaviors of the respondent's current or previous mentor(s). A typical item on this questionnaire is: does/did the mentor assist you in obtaining future assignments? To items answered in the affirmative, the respondents then rate the selected behaviors on a 5-point helpfulness scale with five as extremely helpful and one as not helpful at all. As indicated, over 8,000 soldiers completed this survey.

A factor analysis of the 16 behavioral items indicates three separate dimensions of the mentoring practices in the U.S. Army: a) career achievement, b) psychosocial functions, and c) job coaching. The job-coaching dimension focuses on helping the protégé with current job tasks rather than on accomplishing long-term goals (Steinberg & Foley, 2000).

Informal and formal mentoring. Another dimension of the mentoring process involves the formation of these relationships (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). There are informal mentoring relationships, which are the most common form of mentoring in the workplace, and evolve spontaneously between the mentor and protégé. The mentor and the protégé develop this relationship, naturally. The more formal mentoring relationship involves a deliberate pairing of mentors with protégés, who can be "assisted" by implementing a mentoring program for the organization (Navy Medical Corps, 1995). In the military, formal pairings of mentoring dyads would involve a command-sponsored program, such as the program described by the Navy Medical Corps.

Informal and formal mentoring dyads also differ with respect to their longevity and functions. Formal relationships are usually much shorter and more directed toward helping the protégé develop certain job competencies (Navy Medical Corps, 1995; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Formal relationships tend to last from four months to two years; informal mentoring tends to involve a lifetime commitment by the mentors and their protégés (Navy Medical Corps).

Informal mentoring tends to be the more preferred and effective type of mentoring for military and civilian personnel (Lieutenant Colonel [LTC] Lassiter and LTC Rhem, 1990; Navy Medical Corps, 1995; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). LTCs Lassiter and Rhem devised a mentoring questionnaire for students at the Squadron Officers School, Air Command and Staff College, and Air War College. The vast majority of these respondents indicated that informal mentoring practices are acceptable, but a formal mentoring program is not. Ragins and Cotton's (1999) investigation of informal and formal mentoring practices consisted of 510 respondents from various occupations (e.g.,

engineering and journalism). Regardless of the respondents' gender and occupations, those respondents who had received informal mentoring viewed their mentoring experience as more helpful to their career development than those who had received formal mentoring or had never been mentored.

Future Directions: Mentoring and the Internet[2]

Mentoring, which probably began before recorded history, has entered the Internet age. A search of various bibliographical databases (e.g., EBSCO) and computer search engines (e.g., Google) indicated numerous hits for the term: "Internet and mentoring." A Google search, for example, resulted in 87 hits for the cited term.

Goldman (1997) describes a telementoring project, "The National School Network," which supports the academic and social growth of such diverse student populations as middle school students, gifted K-12 students, at-risk K-12 students, and preservice teachers. For example, inner-city 6th graders in Cambridge, MA are submitting E-copies of their writing assignments to adult mentors at the Lotus Development Corporation, BBN, and Harvard University. The student-mentor relationship for these 6th graders can involve one student working with one mentor, one student working with several mentors, or one mentor working with several students. The classroom teacher establishes the student-mentor relationships by entering mentors and students into respective "pools" of names and addresses. The teacher then matches mentors and students. The National School Network can thus be considered as a formal mentoring program. As such, the student-mentor relationship would be short-term and bound to particular classroom task(s).

The military has a few established telementoring programs. A search of the

[2] Such mentoring has been called virtual mentoring, E-mentoring or telementoring.

military databases (i.e., ARI's Virtual Library, The Center for Army Lessons Learned [CALL] Virtual Library The Defense Technical Information Center [DTIC]; and Training and Doctrine Command's [TRADOC] Virtual Library) produced fewer than a dozen hits for the terms, "E-mentoring and telementoring." [3] These hits included a proposed project on disaster relief and emergency medical services (Duke, 1999) and a proposed experiment on the value of E-mentoring (Bonk & Wisher, 2000). Also unearthed was an overview of Task Force XXI, which described a telementoring system between a medic and a physician or physician's assistant. (COL Goedkoop & Captain Venable, 1997). Little information is thus available in the military literature concerning telementoring as part of a developed instructional package.

Summary and Concluding Comments

This paper has thus far reviewed the mentoring practices in the U.S. Army and corporations. As discussed, mentoring involves a relationship between an expert or experienced person, the mentor, with a novice or inexperienced individual, the protégé. Mentors also serve to help the protégé with regards to: (a) career achievement, (b) psychosocial functions in the organization, and (c) job performance. Another aspect of the mentoring practices involves the type of relationship between mentor and protégé that consists of informal or formal relationships. Little, however, is known about the: a) impact of mentoring upon a soldier's career development, psychosocial functioning, and job performance; b) typical duration of mentoring relationships in the Army, and b) most prevalent types of Army mentoring dyads—formal or informal.

Many issues, however, still remain about the mentoring process for the U.S.

[3] A search of the databases for ARI and CALL did reveal nearly 60 hits for the term, "E-mentoring;" however, nearly all of these hits dealt just with mentoring. In addition, several duplicate hits were found in searching the TRADOC and DTIC databases.

Army. These issues include the: a) definition of mentoring, b) relative value of mentoring for job performance and career development, and c) potential use of telementoring tools by the U.S. Army. Information about these issues will help the U.S. Army to better understand the extent, function and impact of current Army mentoring practices. For example, a prevalence of formal mentoring would, as indicated, suggest that the Army mentoring process is geared toward enhancing a soldier's performance on duty-related tasks.

The Present Investigation: An Exploratory Study

Objectives

This investigation was an exploratory investigation concerning mentoring in the Army. The primary objectives of this exploratory investigation involved providing insights into the:

1. The Army's concept of mentoring.
2. Amount of mentoring experienced by a typical solider in the Army.
3. Length of a typical mentoring relationship in the Army.
4. Process of forming Army mentor-protégé relationships.
5. Relative value of mentoring to the protégé's: a) performance on job-related tasks, b) classroom performance and c) career development.
6. Potential use of a telementoring system in the Army.
7. Perceptions of Army personnel and DA employees concerning the advantages and disadvantages of a telementoring system.

Method

Participants. Participants came from Fort Data, which is primarily a schoolhouse

installation. They consisted of 11 people (8 Active Army personnel, 1 member of a Reserve Component, and 2 civilian personnel) who were associated with Fort Data's instructional programs. These participants included: a) five military instructors (3 from officer courses and 2 from non-commissioned officer {NCO]); b) three military students (2 officers and 1 NCO); c) two training managers, a military officer and a civilian DA employee. Except for the civilian training manager, these participants had military field experience and had been through a formal military training course.

Instruments. The instruments consisted of a self-administered questionnaire and a structured interview form. The self-administered questionnaire was composed of:

1. Set A: Background Information. This section consisted of three items dealing with the participants' current job status and military background.

2. Set B: Mentoring in the U.S. Army. The section contained six items about the participants' expectations concerning the: a) optimal procedures for forming a mentor-protégé relationship,

b) length of the mentoring relationship, c) type of person who should be a mentor for job-related tasks and schoolhouse programs; and d) effectiveness of mentoring for helping protégés with job-related tasks, career development, and schoolhouse performance.

3. Set C: Being a Protégé. This section consisted of seven items dealing with the participants' experience as protégés. These items involved such aspects of these experience as the: a) number of mentors during their career, b) procedures of forming the typical mentoring relationship, c) length of the relationship, and d) effectiveness of the mentoring relationship(s) on job-related tasks, career development, and schoolhouse programs.

4. Set D. Being a Mentor. This section had seven items on the participants' experience as mentors. These items paralleled those for Set C.

This questionnaire contained two other important elements. One, it contained a proposed definition of mentoring, which was stated on the first page of the questionnaire. Participants were requested to use this definition to answer items for question sets B-D. Two, the questionnaire contained a miscellaneous item concerning the participants' use of such computer or telementoring tools/resources as a chat room.

The structured interview form instrument contained 12 items. These items delved into such issues as the: (a) proposed definition of mentoring, (b) the advantages and problems with telementoring, and (c) task(s) most suitable for mentoring. The interviewer also asked the participants to elaborate upon their answers to selected questionnaire items.

Procedure. During a one-hour session, each participant completed the self-administered questionnaire and interview. Participants were interviewed individually. The interviewer wrote down the participants' comments. A tape recorder was also used to record the participants' comments.

Data analysis. The author scored and analyzed the data. Analyzing the questionnaire data involved tabulating the frequency of responses for each alternative to each item. When participants chose two or more alternatives to an item, these responses formed another category.

The author scored the interview data by going over his notes and listening to the taped sessions. He then transcribed the different responses to each item. After doing this, response categories for each item were developed. This author then tabulated the number

of responses per category, which could include two or more responses per participant.

Findings

This section contains the main findings for the participants' questionnaire responses (Questionnaire Data) and interview comments (Interview data). The main findings for the Questionnaire Data and Interview Data are presented separately and sequentially.

Questionnaire Data. The main findings for the participants' questionnaire data are as follows[4].

1. Mentoring occurs frequently in the U.S. Army. Nearly all participants indicated having three or more mentors, and, correspondingly mentoring three or more people.

2. The participants expected the protégé and mentor to jointly initiate the mentoring relationships. Six participants professed this expectation.

3. A majority of participants indicated that they, as the mentor, initiated the mentoring relationships. Participants expressing this view included nearly all the students and a majority of the instructors.

4. A majority of participants expected the mentoring process to last throughout a protégé's career.

5. The participants claimed to have typically spent a few months to a few years in any given mentoring relationship.

6. Their mentors tended to be a person above them in the chain of command.

7. The mentoring process for these participants tended to deal with the protégés' preparation for the next career step. During the interview session, all but one participant

[4] The listing below is based upon the order of questions for Set's B and C, rather than in order of importance.

claimed that mentoring helped them go into the right career direction

8. The mentoring process for these participants also seemed to involve dealing with a protégé's personal problems. A few claimed that mentoring helped them "get stuff off their chest" or deal with relationship problems. Such problems may have a negative affect upon a soldier's performance.

9. The mentoring process had a significant or extremely significant impact on a protégé's career development and performance on duty-related tasks. Nearly all participants indicated either significant or extremely significant effects for mentoring on those questions dealing with career development and performing duty-related tasks.

10. The impact of mentoring upon the participants' performance in a schoolhouse program was not clear; three claiming an extremely significant impact; three claimed a moderate impact and one a significant impact. One participant, a student, had no idea. During the interview session, one instructor stated "you cannot possibly reach all students," which was seemingly a source of frustration for this participant.

11. These participants had rarely used the E-mentoring tools, such as a computer database. Only two participants had used the E-mentoring tools offered by Fort Data's training programs, with one of these participants' being the civilian instructor.

Interview Data. The main findings for the participants' interview responses are delineated below.

1. Coaching differs from mentoring. According to the majority of these participants, mentoring involves a personal bond between mentor and protégé while coaching may not.

2. Communication problems seem to be the main barrier in developing a mentoring

relationship. One participant noted problems with a mentor because the mentor was "talking over his head. "

3. Self-satisfaction is the most cited outcome of being a mentor. As a participant stated: "You feel a great deal of personal satisfaction in seeing growth in others."

4. Accessibility of the Internet was the most cited positive effect of E-mentoring.

5. According to these participants, a potential barrier to E-mentoring involves possible problems with deciphering social cues over the Internet. It may be hard, for example, to know via the Internet whether the mentor's feedback represents a non- responsive or non-directive response.

6. The participants noted a need for the U.S. Army to encourage mentoring or to train mentors. One participant stated, 'Army people must be shown the utilitarian aspects of mentoring." Another participant commented about the importance of training mentors to develop the interpersonal skills necessary to be an effective mentor.

General Discussion

Current Directions

The reported research effort's data have provided further insights into several important issues into the mentoring practices of the U.S. Army. They suggest that an operational definition of the mentoring process for the U.S. Army should be as follows:

> Mentoring involves a series of interactions, which lasts for several months or years, between a more experienced individual (mentor) and a less experienced individual (protégé). These interactions involve a personal bond between the protégé and mentor, and have a significant impact upon

the protégé's career development, self-growth, and ability to perform a specific job assignment.

The reported data also suggest that mentoring occurs frequently in the U.S. Army. The process appears to last several months to a few years, with the mentors, typically, initiating the process. The Army's mentoring process is beneficial to protégés, especially concerning their career development and performance on duty-related tasks. Validations of these inferences about the U.S. Army's mentoring process must, of course, await the results of future research efforts.

Conflicts between expectations and experiences. This investigation's data indicate that the U.S. Army's mentoring practices are not meeting certain expectations of the sampled participants. Most of them believe that this process should last throughout their careers. In addition, the sampled participants expect that a protégé and mentor should jointly form the mentoring dyads. As stated above, the participants feel that neither occurred in practice. The pervasiveness of such conflicts between expectations and experiences in the U.S. Army's mentoring process must await the results of further investigations.

The value of a personal bond between protégés and mentor. These participants' interview responses underscored the need for a personal bond between protégés and mentors. They believe that without this bond you have coaching rather than mentoring, with mentors' having a more personal commitment to the protégés or subordinates than would a coach. Hence, the development of a personal bond between mentor and protégé could then be a key characteristic of effective mentoring?

The mentoring literature provides support for the aforementioned hypothesis

about the value of a personal bond between mentors and protégés (Kram, 1988; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). This personal bond leads to mutual trust that consequently leads to acceptance-and-confirmation between mentor and protégé (Kram). As Kram states in her seminal book, *Mentoring at Work*,

> Acceptance and confirmation enable a junior person to experiment with new behaviors. A (mentoring) relationship that provides this function has a basic trust that encourages young adults to take risks…(p. 35)

Possible limitations with the U.S. Army's Mentoring Process. This investigation's findings indicate possible limitations with the Army's mentoring process. Most notably, a strong personal bond between mentor and protégé might not be the norm. As stated, the typical mentoring relationship for these participants lasts for a relatively short duration of months (e.g., 6 to 24 months) rather than years. The latter is characteristic of relationships cemented by a personal bond between mentor and protégé. In addition, the Army training manager, an experienced Army officer, talks about seeing experienced Army personnel give career advice or coach others without the personal and time commitment associated with mentoring. Accordingly, the training manager then claims that there is a "mythical character called mentoring in the U.S. Army." Perhaps, the training manager's statement is a little strong?

Perhaps, a more viable statement is that the U.S. Army's mentoring process while effective is not optimal? As reported, mentoring seems to have had a significant impact upon these participants' career development and performance on duty-related tasks. However, these participants' mentoring experiences seem to involve formal relationships. As reported, their mentor, who, typically, was a person above them in the chain of

command, tended to initiate the mentoring process. Formal relationships are usually less optimal than informal relationships (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Also, the participants have noted a need for the U.S. Army to train mentors. A participant commented about the importance of training mentors to develop the interpersonal skills necessary to be an effective mentor. Evidently, some of his mentors did not have these mentoring prerequisites.

Unresolved issues. As indicated above, several issues have emerged from this investigation's findings concerning the Army's current mentoring practices. The most salient of these issues involve the following questions concerning the Army's current mentoring practice:

1. Does it meet the expectations of its participants?
2. Does Army mentoring typically involve a strong personal bond between mentors and protégés?
3. Is it optimal?

Future Directions: E-mentoring?

As mentioned earlier, E-mentoring might represent the Army's next wave of mentoring. This investigation's data have provided insights into the potential promises and problems with utilizing such systems. The next few paragraph delineate these promises and problems.

Promises. The sampled participants believe that E-mentoring would allow protégés to have much more access to their mentors than they do under current Army mentoring practices. In the words of a participant, "it (the Internet) can be accessed 24/7," which would allow protégés to pose a question to E-mentors at any time. In

addition, e-mentors would provide protégés with more attention than they possibly could receive under current situations with Army instructors are so overworked.

There are several other potential advantages of E-mentoring. Most prominently, E-mentoring would allow mentoring to occur regardless of the mentor and protégé's physical distance from each other. Protégé X could continue his relationship with Mentor Y, who has just been shipped to Kuwait. Such remote mentoring is much more difficult to accomplish under current mentoring practices.

Barriers. According to nearly all participants, a severe barrier to E-mentoring involves the problems with communicating, personally, over the net. The civilian training manager noted the impersonal nature of the written word, which is the prevalent mode of transmitting information via e-mail. This participant also suggested that without the needed non-verbal cues (e.g. body language) a protégé might experience difficulty in interpreting a telementor's message and vice-versa. A protégé, for instance, might take unwarranted offense at feedback provided by the telementor, which would almost certainly obstruct the development of a personal bond between the two. Five participants have, correspondingly, argued that the personal bond might not be as great between mentor and protégé with each at different locations than when each is co-located. As a sampled student observed, "a mentor can't understand your strengths without seeing you daily in face-to-face interactions. "

Another possible barrier to the advent of E-mentoring involves a lack of knowledge by potential users regarding the existence and value of such systems. Several participants exclaimed that they were not aware of Fort Data's has E-mentoring resources. The U.S. Army must then do a much better job of publicizing its E-mentoring

tools; otherwise, they may rarely get used, regardless of their potential value.

A possible solution to these barriers: telementoring. A telementoring program might be the answer to the Army's mentoring needs. Such a program, which would involve equipping the participants' desktop computers with a videoconferencing mechanism, would allow the mentor and protégé to observe each other's non-verbal cues (e.g., a smile or a frown). Hence, a telementoring program would seemingly allow a mentor and protégé to communicate effectively over vast distances.

A structured telementoring program (STP). Perhaps, an STP would further optimize E-mentoring? Such a program would combine the power of information technology with the careful planning of instructional design. An STP could also be designed that would include the best elements of informal and formal mentoring.

The work of Single and Muller (1999) and the comments of the participants could provide a basis for developing and implementing an STP. Single and Muller (1999) suggest, for example, that the implementation of an STP consist of three phases—planning, structure, and assessment (Single & Muller, 1999). Adequate planning consists of recruiting mentors and matching mentors and protégés. Structure involves having the mentors explicitly follow predetermined guidelines. Assessment includes evaluating the mentoring process's effectiveness.

Adequate planning might be the most important part of this implementation process. As suggested by several participants, care must be taken in recruiting the telementor(s). According to these participants, a telementor must be a caring person who has the required task and computer expertise. The two sampled training managers stressed the need for carefully matching mentors with protégés. The military training

manager believed that this matching process could be accomplished by having a short biography about the mentor and other relevant information on a website. The protégé could then choose the telementor who seemed to be most compatible with his/her needs and interests.

Final Thoughts

This investigation's findings have relevance for the U.S. Army and the mentoring field. Based upon them, a potentially viable and much needed definition of mentoring has emerged. As indicated above, a key element of that definition is that mentoring involves a strong personal bond between protégé and mentor.

Important insights into the Army's mentoring practices have also been obtained. Mentoring is seemingly a pervasive occurrence in the U.S. Army, as it probably is in most other work-place settings. However, the Army's mentoring process while effective might not be optimal.

As discussed, an STP could help the Army and civilian training programs optimize their mentoring process. This program would combine the potential power of 21st century technologies with proven instructional design practices. Correspondingly, this program should help the Army and other organizations to reach the good young talent, who otherwise would leave them.

However, and this is a big however, much research is still needed concerning the current and future directions of mentoring practices. Several unresolved issues have been noted about the Army's current mentoring practices. One such issue involves determining the extent of the personal bond found in typical Army mentoring relationships. Many questions also remain about the future of mentoring in the Army and other organizations.

One such question is: Can an STP be successfully implemented? Perhaps, papers in future AERA annual meetings will deal with these issues and questions? And perhaps, these papers will generate still further questions concerning the ancient but still very important process—mentoring?

References

Bonk, C J. & Wisher, R A Number: (2000, October). *Applying collaborative and e-learning tools to military distance learning: A research framework* (Tech Report 1107). Sciences Alexandria VA: Army Research Institute for the Behavioral And Social Science. (DTIC No. ADA 389681)

Department of the U.S. Army. (2001, May). *U.S. Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study Report to the U.S. Army (*Executive Summary). Available @ http://www.army.mil/features/ATLD/report.pdfDepartment of the U.S. Army. (1999, August) *Army Leadership: Be, Know, Do.* (Department of U.S. Army Field Manual 22-1000). Washington D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the U.S. Army. Available @ htttp://1www.usma.edu/Cpme/Education/Reading/RM%2022-100/FM%2022-100.htm

Department of the U.S. Army. (1994, October) *The Enduring Legacy: Leader Development for America's Army.* (Department of Army Pamphlet 350-58) Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the U.S. Army. Available @ htttp://160.149.109.31/cal/lid/c700/DAPam350-58/p350_58.pdf

Duke, J H. (1999, Jan). *Disaster relief and emergency medical services (DREAMS): Digital EMS project (Annual Report).* Houston, TX: Texas University Health Center at Houston (DTIC No.: ADA364328)

Goldman, M. (1997). *Perspective on Telementoring and Mentor Center*. Available @ http:/nsn.bbn.com/telementor_wrkshp/goldman.html.

Johnson, B. W., Huwe, J. M., Fallow, A. M. Lall, R. Holmes, Captain E. K., Hall, W.

(1999, Dec). Does mentoring foster success? *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, 152(12), 44-48.

Kram K. E. (1985, April). Improving the mentoring process. *Training and Development Journal, 39*(4), 40-43.

Kram K. E. (1988). *Mentoring at Work. Developmental Relationships in Organizational Life*. Laham, MD: University Press of America.

Lassiter, LTC A. E. & Rhem, LTC D. C. (1990, May). *Should the Air Force establish a formalized mentoring program?* (Research Report). Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air War College. (DTIC No. ADA234906)

Mertz, N .T. (2000, April*). Unraveling the Definitional Threads: Mentoring and Academe*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Seattle, WA. (ERIC Document No. ED451768)

Ragins, B. R. and Cotton, J. L. (1999). Mentor functions and outcomes: A comparison of men and women in formal and informal mentoring relationships. A*pplied Psychology* 84(4), 529-550.

Single, P. B. and Muller, C. B. (1999, April). *Electronic mentoring: Issues in advanced research and practice.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Mentoring Association (pp. 234-250). Atlanta, GA. (ERIC Document No. ED 439 683.

Steinberg, A.G. and Foley, D. M (1999). *Mentoring in the U.S. Army: From Buzzword to practice. Military Psychology, 11*(4), 365-379.

Viator, R. E. & Scandura, T. A. (1991). A study of mentor-protégé relationships between mentors in a large public accounting firm. *Accounting Horizons,5(3)* 20-30.

TM035310

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: An examination of current and future directions in the U.S. Army's Mentoring Process

Author(s): Theodore M. Shlechter

Corporate Source: Army Research Institute

Publication Date: presented April, 2003

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1

[X]

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A

[ ]

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B

[ ]

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, → please

Signature: Ted Shlechter	Printed Name/Position/Title: Ted Shlechter	
Organization/Address: Army Research Institute	Telephone: 502-387-9459	FAX:
	E-Mail Address: Drteds@yahoo.com	Date: 8/5/03

(Over)

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, *or*, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE ON ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
1129 SHRIVER LAB
COLLEGE PARK, MD 20742-5701
ATTN: ACQUISITIONS

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
4483-A Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, Maryland 20706

Telephone: 301-552-4200
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
FAX: 301-552-4700
e-mail: ericfac@inet.ed.gov
WWW: http://ericfacility.org